

2013 Michigan Senate Bills on HT 2 Minutes: *A Feminist Abolitionist Approach*

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March 26, 2014

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My name is Andrea Lavigne. As a feminist and social worker, I would like to address three weaknesses of the HT bills and provide my expectations. The 3 weaknesses involve:

1. All the bills that address child sex trafficking victims
2. The bills that address Adult Entertainment clubs
3. The bill that addresses the Composition of the HT Board

Firstly, I want to address all the ST bills which pertain to child sex trafficking victims under the age of 18 years old, and are intended to provide support or eliminate criminal penalties. Pointe blank, these bills inadvertently deny the intrinsic harm of prostitution, for the fact that they just help child victims. This denial, is based on the sexist myth, that adults and children used in the prostitution, are two separate groups of people. The truth is, they are the same group of people at two points in time. No matter what age, ST victims share the same demographic reasons for entering the sex trade, all based on coercion; and, suffer the same physical and psychological harms due to prostitution.

Let's not wait for child victims of prostitution, who managed to not die, to be written off as consenting adults. Apply all this legislation equally to both children and women used in prostitution and sex trafficking.

Secondly, I want to address the 2 bills that address Adult Entertainment businesses: 594 and 595.

Perpetrator Language

Firstly, the language used in the "Adult Entertainment" bills, is the same language **manufactured** by the sex trade industry. The term "Adult Entertainment Clubs" is **euphemism** for, "Legalized Sex Trafficking Enterprises" or "Legally Sanctioned Female Auction Blocks". We don't buy and sell desperate black people or commoditize their racial inequality under the guise of entertainment in auction block atmospheres. So, why is this any different when it comes to women?

Ban all "adult entertainment" clubs.

Secondly, these bills inadvertently recognize the legitimacy of "Adult Entertainment" clubs, by addressing them as such. Strip clubs are sex trafficking enterprises, but just legal. Shouldn't they only exist during war time? No other jobs require sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and rape-for-pay, to be part of the job description -----except when it comes to women because we are still sub-human.

Iceland, a female-friendly country that happens to recognize women as human beings, has banned strip clubs so not only now has their legal sex trafficking business cease from existence, but because of this ban, their illegal sex trafficking has been greatly reduced. Sex trafficking in Michigan can be greatly reduced, starting with Lansing's own back yard. If a ban, for some bizarre reason, is too unrealistic, then, at the very least, this bill should call for a **moratorium** on all legalized ST enterprises.

Lastly, I want to address to the bill that deal with the Composition of HT Board: SB 596

Section 3 states who the human trafficking board shall include as members. I believe that this bill needs to require that all members are Abolitionists and at least one or two are Abolitionist Feminist(s) and one or two of them are former sex trafficking victims who are abolitionists. To preclude pro-legalization and other so-called "free speech" advocates from infiltrating the board, this bill should require board members to take an oath that upholds strictly to the Abolitionist Approach, working with the perspective that the use of women and girls for prostitution falls under the scope of violence and discrimination rather than under the scope of sex work occupational hazard.